

WHEREAS, The City of Seattle has led the country in securing workplace protections, labor standards, establishing civil liberties, equal rights, and the dignity of all workers, and in recognizing the importance of labor unions; and

WHEREAS, Seattle's organized labor unions and the broader labor movement have been vital to the progress of American democracy, helping to secure not only higher standards of living, but greater access to democracy, giving workers the ability to counter the power of money with the power of many, both in the workplace and in the halls of government; and

WHEREAS, unions have helped create healthier workers, workplaces, and communities, according to the US National Library of Medicine National Institutes of Health; and

WHEREAS, labor unions promote health and well-being by ensuring higher wages, retirement benefits, limits on working hours, opportunities for job training, safer environments and discrimination-free workplaces, and the benefits also extended beyond union members by unions negotiating health insurance for the families, paid vacations, and holidays for all workers, according to the University of Washington School of Public Health, and

WHEREAS, many of the pivotal moments that define our City involve worker struggles and labor issues; and

WHEREAS, unions help employers create a more stable, productive workforce where workers have a say in improving their jobs; and

WHEREAS, On the one-hundred-year anniversary of the Seattle General Strike, 2019 presents the opportunity to acknowledge several important anniversaries in Seattle and in Washington State including the Spokane Free Speech Fight of 1909, the Centralia Tragedy of 1919, and the 20th anniversary of the Battle in Seattle WTO demonstrations; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle General Strike of 1919 was a five-day general work stoppage by more than 65,000 workers lasting from February 6 to February 11 of that year in support of workers striking to protect their right to fair wages and to bargain collectively and directly with their employers; and

WHEREAS, the Seattle General Strike lives in popular memory as a testament to the power of solidarity and direct action for working people; and

WHEREAS, the General Strike represents an example of the strength of uniting diverse groups across occupations and political affiliations; and

WHEREAS, the strike had lasting consequences for working people in Seattle, the United States, and beyond and serves as inspiration for current labor and political campaigns, such as the 2013 Seattle Fast Food Strikes; and

WHEREAS, a coalition of labor organizations, museums and archives, and labor heritage organizations are organizing a series of events throughout 2019 to recognize and educate the public about the significance and legacy of these important events;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL HEREBY PROCLAIMS 2019 TO BE

A YEAR OF COMMEMORATION OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT AND THE HISTORY OF WORKING PEOPLE

in the City of Seattle, and we invite Seattle area residents to involve themselves in educational activities that foster understanding of the history of working people and the role of labor organizations in Seattle and in Washington State

Council President Bruce A. Harrell

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